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Koskie, Brandi. "Obama Proposes Longer School Days, Extended School Year." *EDU in Review*. 12 Mar. 2009. Web. 5 Aug. 2010.

*The following is from a news blog published by the senior editor of an education news website.*

For this generation of students to remain competitive with their international peers as adults, they need to start spending more time in school. This week President Obama proposed that American school children extend their time in class, either by lengthening the school day, or spending less time on summer vacation.

"We can no longer afford an academic calendar designed when America was a nation of farmers who needed their children at home plowing the land at the end of each day," Obama said. He continued to say "That calendar may have once made sense, but today, it puts us at a competitive disadvantage. Our children spend over a month less in school than children in South Korea. That is no way to prepare them for a 21st century economy."

In fact, American children spend the least amount time in the classroom when compared to other countries. Currently, the school year length in the States is 180 days. Advocates are pushing further toward a 200-day school year, which would align with Thailand, Scotland and the Netherlands, and leave us a close second with Israel, South Korea and Japan, who leads with a 243-day school year.

Country	Days of School
Japan	243
South Korea	220
Israel	216
Luxembourg	216
The Netherlands	200
Scotland	200
Thailand	200
Hong Kong	195
England	192
Hungary	192
Swaziland	191
Finland	190
New Zealand	190
Nigeria	190
France	185
United States	180

This comes as Obama makes it very clear that education is on his hot-list of priorities. He admits the notion of spending more time in school is not "wildly popular," but necessary.

He was applauded for his breadth of knowledge regarding the public education system in the U.S. He cited that one-third of the 13- and 14-year-olds in our country cannot read at an appropriate level for their age, and that the eighth grade curriculum is two years behind competing nations. He says the part of the problem is our "race to the bottom" mindset, wherein states are comfortable with lower standards for students.

Obama and his Secretary of Education Arne Duncan are truly advocates for a superior education system than that we've previously and currently known. It's imperative that states use the stimulus package money to rebuild curriculum, increase teacher pay, improve school conditions, offer newer technologies to students and even extend the school year to ensure that this generation can not only keep up with their international peers, but even surpass them in the professional environment of the coming decades.